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JURY SERVICE

IN THE

*Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts*

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
COLLECTION

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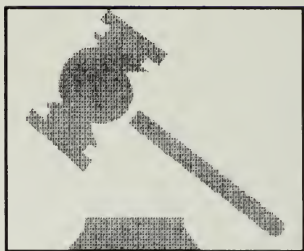
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**FEW  
FACTS  
ABOUT  
JURY  
DUTY**

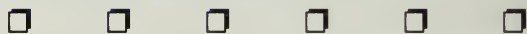
## How important is jury duty?



In a democracy such as ours, jury duty makes a difference. Everyone who participates in jury duty is making a contribution towards a

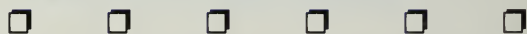
better life in our country. The Massachusetts and United States Constitutions guarantee all citizens the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers.

## Who are jurors?



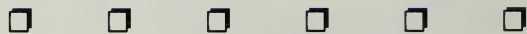
Jurors can be anyone we know. Jurors are doctors, lawyers, window washers, cab drivers, teachers, single parents, politicians, police officers, firefighters, and clergy. Everyone must serve.

## Where do we get jurors?



Jurors are selected randomly by computer from the census lists from all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

## How long do jurors serve?



Our system is called the One-Day/One-Trial System. Jurors serve for one day or for the duration of one trial. Statistics indicate that 95 percent of our jurors complete their service in three days or less; many are finished in one day.

## What do jurors do?

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In criminal cases, the jurors decide the guilt or innocence of people charged with crimes.

Robbery, assault, drugs, and murder are examples.

In civil cases the jury decides either for the plaintiff, the party who initiated the case or for the defendant. Cases where people sue each other or businesses are examples of civil cases.

Jurors sit in the jury box during a trial and listen to the testimony and evidence presented in a case. Sometimes they are allowed to take notes. You don't need a law degree to be a good juror. All that's needed are common sense and a sense of fairness in weighing all the evidence to make an impartial decision in the case.

## Do jurors get paid?

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Jurors are paid by their employers for the first three days of jury duty. The Commonwealth compensates jurors \$50 a day for every day of service starting the fourth day. Self-employed jurors compensate themselves for the first three days of jury duty. Unemployed jurors are eligible for out-of-pocket expenses (travel, parking, or child care) for the first three days. Starting the fourth day of service unemployed jurors receive \$50 a day.

## How long have there been jurors?

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History traces jurors back to the ancient Greeks where up to 500 people sat on a jury.

The right to a jury trial is cited in the Magna Charta of 1215 in England. The early colonists in Boston and in Massachusetts brought English justice, or common law, to these shores. Part of that legal system called for the use of jurors in resolving disputes.

### **What does a judge do during a trial?**

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In non-jury cases (called bench or jury-waived trials) the judge performs the role of a jury in court cases. In a jury trial, the judge becomes more of a referee making sure the trial is conducted fairly, according to court rules and procedures.

### **How often do I have to perform jury duty?**

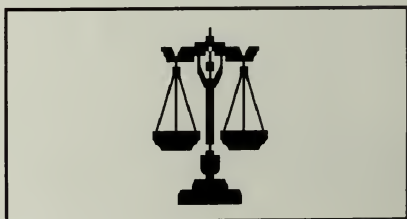
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Those jurors who show up for jury duty, even if they aren't put on a trial and serve just one day, are disqualified from jury duty for three years.

### **Where do I serve jury duty?**

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Jurors appear at courthouses in the county in which they live. For instance, jurors who reside in Boston, located in Suffolk County, must serve in court locations in Suffolk County.



# THE JUROR INFORMATION LINE ☎ :

**1-800-THE-JURY  
(1-800-843-5879)**

FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED ONLY:

**TTY# 1-800-328-3202**

*Both of these numbers are accessible  
from within Massachusetts only.*

*If you are calling from outside of the  
Commonwealth, please call:*

**1-617-422-5860**

THE JUROR INFORMATION LINE  
IS OPEN  
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY  
9 AM TO 4:30 PM.

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